

JA Inside Industry™ **Program for under-graduate students in India**

Introduction

About Junior Achievement Worldwide

JA Worldwide™ (Junior Achievement) is the world's largest organization dedicated to educating students about work readiness, financial literacy and entrepreneurship, through experiential, hands-on programs. The organization is dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy. Since its founding in 1919, JA has contributed to the business and economic education of 79 million young people around the world.

JA Worldwide reaches to approximately 7.5 million students per year in 305,000 classrooms and after-school locations. JA programs are taught by volunteers in more than 113 countries around the world. Some of the world's best known organizations that support JA Worldwide include Microsoft, Deloitte, HP, KPMG, Dell, Accenture, GE International, Hewitt Associates and many others.

In partnership with businesses and educators, JA brings the real world to students, opening their minds to their potential and providing a proven bridge between education and business. Through age-appropriate curricula, JA programs teach students how they can impact the world around them as individuals, workers and consumers. JA Worldwide appreciates the commitment shown by its volunteers and teachers to make this program a success.

JA Inside Industry: Program Overview

JA Inside Industry is a uniquely designed program based on open communication between industry professionals / experts and the students preparing to be inside industry. The program is a blend of practical knowledge, shared experiences and real business along with business simulation games and online assessments. This program has been developed, specifically for India, by the JA India pioneer group of volunteers / JA India team.

The program aims to enhance industry awareness of the students, in graduating colleges, in order to help them become better grounded, well aware professionals. This is achieved by demystifying businesses and organizations to students and helping them understand how businesses / organizations work. An insight is provided into the real world of business providing students a practical understanding of organizations, interspersed with experience sharing. The program focuses on the typical complexities inherent in different types of industries, nature of roles within industries, rising challenges as the industries evolve in response to globalization and providing preliminary exposure to organizational challenges within new entrepreneurs Vs stable organizations. The program is also designed to help students understand the requisites for any professional to successfully deliver as a professional; and the challenges they need to prepare for as they make the transition from the academic world to the working world.

We hope that such awareness building programs about the working world, early in the education years, would help young undergraduates make informed decisions about academic specializations

/ professional pursuits and would encourage them to prepare themselves better for their professional years ahead.

Following participation in the program, students should be able to:

1. Develop an operating level understanding of how businesses / organizations work
2. Understand organizational structures and processes that deliver economic objectives
3. Understand how economic and social environments influence industries / organizations
4. What are the implications, therefore, in current and aspiring professionals
5. Appreciate the requisites to transition from a student to a successful professional

The overall program is delivered over seven sessions.

Session Details

SESSION I- INSIGHT

Before we commence the Inside Industry program, it is important to know the current level of students' understanding about the Indian economy, Indian industry and the working world. For example, do students understand the economic and industrial landscape? Which are our major industries or major export earners? What is the extent of domestic talent availability and absorption? What are some of the key industry challenges / threats? Or do they understand what it takes to make a successful transition to the working world? Or what it takes to succeed in the working world? Even still, how different or similar is this working world to the world they are already aware of? The overarching objective is to understand the extent of gap in students' understanding about the working world that they are about to engage with.

Indian economy has been growing yet opportunity creation is far less than available workforce. Despite availability of a large workforce, industries are facing talent shortage. Does resolution to some of the reasons for such gap lie within the aspiring professionals? The need to be employable requires the individual to have clarity on their professional and personal goals / objectives and requisite knowledge of future avenues that they aspire to pursue. It is this clarity and knowledge that would help the individual identify their unique gaps and thereafter embark upon the best path that would make them ready by bridging the gap. If the graduating batch is only a few years away from joining the workforce, it needs to be understood how prepared are they in making this transition?

The session's objectives therefore are:

1. To acquaint the students with the width and depth of opportunity creation in India
2. To understand if they are researching well to understand the full breadth of opportunities that are available to them
3. To enhance awareness in students about the extent of talent availability and absorption within the Indian economy
4. To help students understand thus 'talent gap' and appreciate the reasons for talent shortage despite having so many educated youth
5. Introduce to students, in a limited manner, the 'different' nature of the working world
6. Emphasize to students the need to bridge their individual 'gaps' in becoming ready talent

In summary, this session sets the context for the overall program by providing a brief insight into the state of Indian economy, extent and dimensions of opportunity creation, state of talent, talent availability and talent absorption and the priorities, that should be, for current and aspiring professionals.

SESSION II: UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS

To become successful, professionals need to understand the real world of decision making and the inherent operating challenges / constraints. Each industry / organization / profession presents its unique combination of challenges and constraints; and so also demands its unique set of strengths from its professionals. Therefore, as students make their work choices and then transition from academic world to their preferred work choice, they need to comprehend well the requisites to successfully deliver given those challenges and constraints; and ensure that they have the requisite strengths to play on. But then, to be prepared to take on those challenges and constraints, students need to understand what actually happens in their chosen working world.

Students therefore need to have atleast a preliminary understanding of the real life working world of economic objectives, process of achieving economic objectives, organization structures, decision making and the demands they place on professionals. It is people, within businesses, who make decisions on business objectives and factors of production. Organization structures are created to aid such decision making process. The decision making is further supported by creating systems for information flow through and across organization structures.

In this context, the session explains to students the concept of business, business objectives and factors of production. Thereafter, the session introduces students to the concept of organization structures and information flow. The next two sessions build upon this base and engage students at a more detailed level.

Objectives of this session:

1. To demystify the concept of 'Business' to students and provide them an operating level understanding of what happens inside 'Business'.
2. To help students understand the structures (industries, organizations, functions) that are created, and the manner in which these structures need to coordinate to deliver on economic objectives.
3. To help students understand the typical decisions that are made in 'Businesses' and the roles individuals play as professionals within the above structures.
4. Given the decisions that are made, the manner in which decision making is conducted and the role professionals play, help students understand the demands that are placed on the individual; and therefore what do they need to prepare for? *(This session would at best emphasize this aspect at a cursory level. The next two sessions would help engage at a detailed level)*

SESSION III & IV: DECONSTRUCTING BUSINESS: PART I & II

Having developed the background on business, business objectives, factors of production and organization structures, the next two sessions engage students with the next level of detail -- The 'what' and 'how' of typical decision making done within businesses. Students are also provided hands-on experience by making them assume functional roles within smaller teams, where the team as a whole makes quarterly business decisions to achieve the business objective of becoming the 'Best Performing Business', which is measured by a *Performance Index*'.

Sustaining and growing businesses requires consistent achievement of set business objectives. Such achievement is possible through a series of incremental activities – activities that are outcomes of operational, tactical and / or strategic decision making. These decisions are deliberated upon and enacted by functions and people within these functions, suitably aided by requisite information flows. All this may make the world of work very predictable and defined. Yet, we all know that the working world is more about uncertainty and ambiguity, where decisions need to be made despite limited information, where outcomes are defined more by collective or team effort rather than acts of individual brilliance, where change is constant and success is all about incremental progress.

Transition to such working world from the defined and predictable academic world can be quite unsettling – especially for the unprepared. Academic world is one where the environment is predictable and certain, where the roles of participants (school, teachers, parents etc) are largely defined, where the measures for success and the path to success are well laid out (get good grades, which means do well in exams, which requires one to study well) and where individual success has a linear and direct relation with individual efforts. A student who has developed with frame of reference to succeed in an academic environment might not be paying due attention to the traits that he / she needs to develop for staying successful in the much different working world. It is important for volunteers therefore to help students understand the essential cultural differences between the academic and working world.

Through appropriate examples, students are made to understand that while education is necessary to do well in the working world, it is equally important to understand how team work, collective efforts, negotiations and buy-in of colleagues are mandatory to achieving outcomes. Students should be adequately engaged to help them understand the real work place challenges such as ambiguity, uncertainty, constant change and incomplete information yet the pressure to deliver outcomes and that too on time.

The objectives of these two sessions therefore are:

1. Help students understand the rationale for creating organizations structures that make decisions on achievement of economic objectives
2. Provide students a hands-on, real life feel of decision making within organizations in various functions / roles
3. With the above experience as the background, help students understand the importance of additional professional abilities that an individual needs to possess

In summary, students are made to understand how the operating world looks like in the real life of businesses / organizations and what professionals do to meet economic objectives. Given the understanding of the working world, what should their priorities be therefore, over and above successfully completing their education, to prepare themselves for their transition to the working world?

SESSION V: BEING EMPLOYABLE

The objective of this session is to summarize the learnings across all the previous sessions in a coherent / integrated manner eventually leading to the priorities that should be for the students who are perhaps a year or more away from their individual transitions to the working world. If they now understand the workplace and what it demands, then what is it that they need to focus on to become employable and stay employable?

Employability, the much referred phrase by Indian industry today, what does this mean? If being employable is important, then what will make an individual EMPLOYABLE? We all keep hearing about unemployability, industry's dissatisfaction with extent of available workforce's employability. Therefore, whose onus is it to make an aspiring professional EMPLOYABLE?

Is it schools who educate the individuals? Corporates who employ talent? Or is it the individual who get absorbed as talent? Irrespective, it is the students who have the maximum stakes in becoming employable. Students should therefore understand what is it that makes them employable, for their preferred choice of professions / careers. They need to apply such understanding to their individual selves and identify their unique needs gaps in becoming adequately employable.

Objectives of this session:

1. To explain to students shifting patterns of employability
2. To help students understand the current demand for the potentially employable
3. To explain the key factors for being employable

SESSION VI: GLOBALIZATION: IMPACT ON EMPLOYABILITY

Globalization is a part of our economy. We might not be able to wish it away. It's a mindset getting increasingly ingrained within Indian business and in the Indian professionals. Ensuring a smooth integration with this trend has been placing its unique set of demands on our economy, our organizations, our governance institutions and certainly our professionals. The challenges of workforce in an increasingly globalizing environment has increased manifold. People may have varying opinions about Globalization – good, bad or ugly. The fact of the matter however is that Globalization is here to stay and we need to equip ourselves to be successful within that and with that.

Objectives of this session:

1. To acquaint students with globalization and the trends in globalization
2. To help students understand the impact of globalization on businesses, organizations and specifically on workforce
3. To acquaint students with how globalization impacts work in organizations with multiple functions and complexities

SESSION VII: ENTREPRENEURSHIP: UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH THE CREATION PROCESS

The primary focus of this session is to provide students a preliminary understanding of entrepreneurs, how entrepreneurs get created and the challenges in setting up entrepreneurs. Looking at it a different way, 'Entrepreneurs' are but businesses in their set up / early stage. Hence, understanding the process of setting up entrepreneurs would help appreciate businesses better.

Objectives of this session:

1. To help students Entrepreneurship and therefore appreciate the stages involved in creating businesses / organizations
2. To help students appreciate the challenges in Entrepreneurship Vs a stable organization.
3. To help students understand the pre-requisites for starting a business